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Brokering Identity and Learning Citizenship: Immigration Settlement Organizations and New Chinese Immigrants in Canada

This paper examines citizenship learning and identity construction of new Chinese immigrants in a Canadian immigration settlement organization (ISO). I address the gap between the concept of "settlement" and "citizenship" generated by government-funded ISOs and new immigrants' actual practices in these programs. I adopt Dorothy Smith's approach of examining the social organization of people's everyday lives (Smith 2005) in order to unpack the ruling relations behind the immigrant settlement services and to take the standpoint of Chinese new immigrants. Under this framework, I analyze a Canadian federal government's funding criteria for ISOs and a settlement program's annual report to unpack the ruling relations behind the texts. I further conduct in-depth interviews with two Chinese new immigrants in a Canadian ISO to understand the ruling relations behind citizenship learning and brokering activities in Canadian ISOs from the immigrants' standpoint.

Keywords:

Citizenship learning, identity, ruling relations, standpoint

1 Introduction

Previous studies on new immigrants in Canada who access settlement and language programs primarily focus on citizenship education and curriculum development (Carpenter, 2011; Pinet, 2007), immigrants' identity reconstruction and language learning (Han 2007; Norton 2000; Khalideen, 1998), and immigrants' settlement and integration into the Canadian labour market (Shan, 2009; Guo, 2010; Zhu, 2006). There is scant discussion of the gap between the concept of "settlement" generated by government-funded immigration settlement organizations (ISOs) and the actual practices of these organizations in interactions with the everyday life of new immigrants. In addition, the majority of the literature on language and settlement programs (Bettencourt, 2003; Gronbjer, 1993) focuses on federal immigration policies, the non-profit organization's funding system, the curriculum and organizational development of these programs, and new immigrants' learning practices from the perspective of a top-down approach. Hence, the literature pays less attention to the hierarchical institutional and ruling relations that should be explored from the standpoint of new immigrants, particularly the experiences of Chinese immigrants who have become a large population in the immigrant body and possess a hybrid understanding of the notions of citizenship and identity. As a result, the complex interactions and social relations between the federal government, government-funded settlement agencies, and immigrants remain unexplored and thus require further investigation.

In this paper, I address this void by examining the identity construction and learning process of new Chinese immigrants in a Canadian immigration settlement agency in Toronto. I intend to unpack the ruling relations behind

the learning and settlement activities in immigration settlement organizations. With this concern, I ask the following research questions: How do the immigration settlement/learning programs organize new immigrants' practice of citizenship learning and settlement? How are the texts in the programs (e.g. annual report) organized? How do Chinese new immigrants' understand and experience settlement and learning in the programs?

This paper aims to understand how the brokering activities and citizenship learning in Canadian ISOs are socially organized. While these programs proclaim that their services fit immigrants' needs, their curriculum is designed to fulfill the federal government's funding criterion of "building an integrated, socially cohesive society" (CIC 2010), in order to secure funding from the multiple levels of government. By looking at new immigrants' identity construction and learning practice, I find that the services and activities they provide are "problematic" (Smith, 2005). I use Chinese new immigrants' experience as an ethnographic example. These new immigrants construct their identities in between Canadian and Chinese through their language, settlement, and citizenship learning; their cross-cultural learning experiences and hybrid identities show that the service these settlement programs provide is homogenized. Such an approach excludes new immigrants' knowledge and socio-cultural values. I argue that there are dynamic power relations behind the social service system for newcomers. The brokering activity and citizenship learning within the settlement organizations are socially organized to contain messages with race, gender, and class inequalities.

Methodologically, I unpack the ruling relations revealed in government funding criteria and the settlement program's annual report in order to explore how these texts mediate both the individuals' and agencies' everyday activities from local to global. I particularly adopt Dorothy Smith's approach of examining the social organization of people's everyday lives, which asserts that our everyday world is socially organized in the sense that people's everyday practice has been organized in a particular social order (Smith 2005, p. 123). I use in-depth interviews with two new Chinese immigrants in order to understand the social and ruling relations reading from the texts. I aim to problematize the new

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immigrants and brokering activities of Canadian federal government-funded ISOs.

2 Literature review

2.1 Learning citizenship in immigration settlement organizations

Many scholars discuss the concept of citizenship through multiple aspects of understanding. Delanty (2000) defines citizenship as "membership [in] a political community [that] involves a set of relationships between rights, duties, participation and identity" (p. 9). Bloemraad (2006) states that citizenship is not only "a legal status" that contains meanings of rights and benefits, but also "an invitation to participate in a system of mutual governance" that could be an identity, a sense of belonging to a system (p. 1). Klaver and Odé (2009) discuss the understanding of citizenship in both political-legal and socio-psychological respects and the correlation between citizenship and immigration integration and settlement. They investigate the fundamental changes in Dutch civic integration policies and explore how the policies determine the legal and social position of migrant minorities. From the politico-legal perspective, the authors state that there is a specific bond between a person and a state: the person in a legal sense has "a privileged relationship with his state" (Klaver & Odé 2009, p. vii). In relation to the socio-psychological aspects, they believe that the notion of citizenship refers to "a sense of identity (belonging), commitment and capability" (Klaver & Odé 2009, p. vii). They highlight that there are connections and interactions between both aspects of citizenship. Finally, they see citizenship as a "fundamental value" that significantly impacts immigrants' integration and settlement process in the host society (Klaver & Odé 2009, p. vii).

Citizenship has been discussed as a problematic term for a long time. Marshall (1950) argued that although national citizenship refers to all members of particular societies as having an equal status, there are still injustices between different social classes. Kennedy (2007) discusses this notion through an understanding of how being a citizen can be taken up actively, as a participatory role, rather than simply conferred by a nation state. With these understandings, identity is often seen as a correlated element in becoming a citizen.

Under the Canadian context, Schugurensky (2005) introduces the close relationship and distinction between citizenship and identity. He believes that while citizenship status refers to issues of rights and duties, identity refers to issues of belonging and meaning. Whereas status is about being a full member of a community, identity is about "feeling like a member of that particular community" (Schugurensky, 2005, p. 3). He claims that identity is rooted in factors like a common history, language, religion, values, traditions and culture, which "seldom coincide with the artificial territory of a nation-state" (Schugurensky, 2005, p. 3). Many scholars also believe that the older notion of citizenship ends with the age of globalization (e.g., Falk, 2000). They suggest a transnational and cross-cultural understanding of

citizenship, which should replace its old ties to exclusive territoriality.

While Schugurensky (2005) proposes an understanding of citizenship associated with identity and community, many researchers also discuss the idea of citizenship learning. Joshee (1996) defines citizenship learning as "civilizing newcomers, creating British subjects, promoting patriotism, encouraging awareness of and support for government policy, preparing immigrants for naturalization, and training in language skills" (p. 123). Carpenter (2011) examines the United States federal government's cultivation of "a politics of citizenship" through the Corporation for National and Community Service and the AmeriCorps program (p. ii). She has three main findings regarding citizenship learning. First, she finds that "politics" have been "actively avoided in formalized learning activities within the program" (Carpenter 2011, p. ii). Second, she argues that these regulations create an ideological environment in which learning is separated from experience and social problems. Finally, she points out that the AmeriCorps program cultivates "an institutional discourse" in which good citizenship is "equated with participation at the local scale, which pivots on a notion of community service that is actively disengaged from the State" (Carpenter 2011, pp. ii-iii).

Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) propose a new understanding of how policies regulate migration within the discourse of citizenship under globalized neoliberal restructuring. They believe that the modern conception of citizenship generates complex and multifaceted relationships of "individuals to territories, nation-state, labor markets, communities and households" (Stasiulis, Bakan 2005, p. 11). They point out that migration and immigration policies of liberal democratic states are "implicitly and often explicitly discriminatory in class, racial, regional and national origins, linguistic, gender and other terms" (p. 11). Thus, selection of immigrants as candidates to "fit" the host society citizenship is largely based on "North-South relations, their class positions, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation" (Stasiulis & Bakan 2005, p. 12). As a result, they argue, "migration policies are not the only mechanisms that render citizenship antipodal in the sense of extending both important entitlements, and yet severe forms of 'repressive and exclusionary praxis', they are nonetheless powerful ones in the current historical moment" (Stasiulis & Bakan 2005, p. 12). Meanwhile, they also find that the tendencies of exclusion and hierarchy of citizenship have deepened with neoliberal policies and corporate globalization, and are manipulated by different actors. Therefore, neoliberal policies and globalization have sharpened the "global citizen divide" between citizens in the North, or First World, and poor migrants from the South, or Third World (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005, p. 13).

Ng (1995) points out that "multiculturalism is an ideological construction" that contains the relations of ruling between different ethnic groups, individuals, and the bureaucratic and administrative apparatuses (pp. 45-46). She argues that multiculturalism is a "taken-for-



granted social fact," and it is not a "naturally occurring phenomenon," but a "through and through artifact produced by the administrative processes of a liberal democratic state in a particular historical conjuncture to reconceptualize and reorganize changing social, political, and economic realities" (p. 35).

Citizenship learning under the government's multiculturalist ideology contains hierarchical social relations; the administrative process, government agencies' participation, and different individuals' or immigrants' identity construction are simultaneously involved in the making of citizenship. Bearing in mind the literature discussed above, I will now explore the ISO's brokering activities by examining Chinese new immigrants' identity construction in their citizenship learning practice.

2.2 The politics of settlement service in immigration settlement organizations

Research on immigration settlement organizations pays great attention to history and ISOs' organizational/institutional change (Doyle & Rahi, 1987; Reitz, 2001); funding and delivery of settlement services (Mwarigha, 1997; Sadiq, 2005); immigrants' needs in settlement programs (Beyene, 2000); and formal and informal learning in ISOs (Campbell, Fenwick, Gibb, Guo, Guo, Hamdon & Jamal, 2006). However, there is not enough research that examines the social relations structuring new immigrants' settlement and citizenship learning through understanding immigrants' identity construction and settlement practice.

First, Gibb and Hamdon (2010) discuss how ISOs participate in assisting newcomers in navigating the national employment terrain that requires them "to retrain for their professions" (p. 186). ISOs have provided settlement services for new immigrants, and their administrators and staff have also acted as advocates for individual women and the collective rights of immigrant women in Canada. In particular, Gibb and Hamdon discuss how changes to federal funding structures restrict the amount of advocacy work that "not-for-profit organizations can engage in without losing their funding further, subjecting them to compliance in maintaining inequitable relations" (p. 186). They use Nancy Fraser's (1995, 2001) work on the redistribution of recognition and explore ISOs' practice of building alliances for advocacy with immigrant women and their allies. Using Fraser, Gibb and Hamdon (2010) are able to shift their analysis of how the formal and informal learning occurs in ISOs, and how immigrant women learn knowledge and skills in ISOs, from "the bodies of immigrant women" to "the political and economic structures and discourses" (p. 186).

Furthermore, the funding system for settlement programs in Canada is problematic. Smith (2007) describes how the state has utilized non-profit or community-based organizations for various purposes, such as "monitoring and controlling social justice movements," "diverting public monies into private hands through foundations," "managing and controlling dissent in order to make the world safe for capitalism," "allowing

corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through 'philanthropic' work," and "encouraging social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them" (p. 3). He believes that

The foundations are theoretically a correction for the ills of capitalism, and the actual funding will never go to the programs, services, and institutions that benefit for the poor or disenfranchised, and certainly not affect social change. (Smith, 2007, p. 9)

Based on these theories, this study examines the idea of multiculturalism as a dominant funding criterion and explains how it has been utilized as an ideology, which becomes "common sense" and fails to include new Chinese immigrants in the body of Canadian citizens/immigrants.

3 The study background

This paper uses the CultureLink program as a case study and examines how Chinese newcomers participate in this settlement program learning language, culture, and skills for settlement and integration. In this paper, I extended the inquiry by analyzing CultureLink's annual reports and conducting in-depth interviews with two Chinese newcomers from their programs.

CultureLink is a non-profit community-based ISO funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Government of Ontario, the City of Toronto, United Way Toronto, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It has operated its services for newcomers for over 20 years. In 1988, the HOST program was established in Toronto as a result of recommendations by Employment and Immigration Canada. In 1992, HOST became CultureLink Settlement Services of Metropolitan Toronto. Currently, CultureLink provides two major programs: Employment Services and Community Connections. The employment services program offers newcomers assistance to find jobs. It provides job search workshops, one-on-one employment counselling and referrals, career mentorship, employment seminars, and resume clinics. The community connections program has various activities to assist new immigrants to settle and integrate into Canadian society, including a mentorship program (HOST program), a settlement education partnership in Toronto, a library settlement partnership, citizenship mentoring circles, BikeHost, NEAT walking, a newcomer youth and senior centre, and "Let's talk" English circles.

New Chinese immigrants have become one of the largest groups in the CultureLink program. Many Chinese immigrants have given up their well-paid jobs in China and started a new life in Canada. They approach government-funded settlement services such as the CultureLink program for help. I, as a researcher, have participated in this program as a newcomer and conducted the research with the purpose of unpacking the power relations in immigration settlement programs and addressing social justice for newcomers.

4 Methodology

In this paper, I utilize in-depth interviews from two Chinese new immigrants in the CultureLink program as a “standpoint” in order to understand the social and power relations in organizing immigrants’ citizenship learning and settlement practice in Canadian ISOs. I describe the notion of “ruling relation” and “standpoint,” as below and explain how these notions help me to investigate the brokering activities of ISO from Chinese immigrants’ standpoint.

4.1 Understanding ruling relations and standpoint

The theories of “ruling relations” (Smith, 1987, 2005) and “standpoint” (Hartsock, 2002) enable me to unpack the ruling power from the state and the brokering activities from ISOs, and challenge them by taking the standpoint of Chinese immigrants. Bannerji (2005) addresses the importance of understanding “ruling class” and “ruling ideas” while examining racialized discourses. She points out that the term “ruling ideas” refers to the ideas generated within dominant material relationships, which serve the interests of the privileged groups known as the “ruling class.” The knowledge represents the interests of the ruling class and ruling ideas as “ruling knowledge,” which relies on “epistemologies creating essentialization, homogenization (i.e., de-specification), and an aspatial and atemporal universalization” (Bannerji, 2005, p. 54). Ideology in this sense, understood as an epistemology, has the power in the process of conceptualization and involves the ruling relations.

Hartsock (2002) proposes a “feminist standpoint” (1999, 2002) in order to develop the ground for “specifically feminist historical materialism” and to challenge systemic oppression and the ruling relations (Hartsock, 2002, p. 350). She particularly points out that the lives of women contain possibilities for “developing critiques of domination and visions of alternative social arrangement” (p. 351). She argues that a feminist standpoint could be developed to deepen the critique “available from the standpoint of the proletariat and allow for a critique of patriarchal ideology and social relations that would provide a more complete account of the domination of women than Marx’s critique of capitalism” (p. 351). Her proposal of feminist standpoint provides a framework for not only understanding social relations among women’s lives and practice, but also challenging the ruling power within the social structures. Ng (2006) explores the globalized regime of ruling from the standpoint of immigrant workers and discusses the use of “standpoint” to understand the globalized restructuring. She points out that standpoint means a start point outside of the institutions, from which people could challenge conventional scientific approaches and previous “logic of discovery” within the institution (p. 179).

In the following sections, I utilize the federal government’s funding criteria and the ISO’s annual reports to explore how ruling relations have been socially organized. I then discuss identity construction and participation from Chinese newcomers’ perspectives. I aim to

take Chinese new immigrants’ identity con-struction as a standpoint to problematize ISO organization of newcomers’ settlement and citizenship learning.

5 Unpacking ruling relations: An analysis of government and program texts

In this section, I analyze texts from Canadian federal governments’ funding criteria and an ISO’s annual report to unpack ruling relations behind Chinese immigrants’ settlement and learning practice.

Text 1: CIC’s 2011 guideline for funding application

Citizenship and Immigration Canada provides a guideline called *National Call for Proposal: A Guideline for Applicants* (2011). In this guideline, the CIC requires that targeted applicants focus on two themes of the settlement program for projects that are national in scope. They address the themes as follows:

1. Information & Orientation Services: Provides newcomers and prospective immigrants with access to accurate, timely information about life in Canada. Activities include in-person or on-line orientation activities, or indirectly, through advertising, websites, or publications.

2. Community Connections: Supports newcomers in their social engagement efforts, and engages communities in supporting the full participation of newcomers. Examples of services include individual and community bridging, mentoring programs, supporting and encouraging volunteerism, fostering cultural awareness, and welcoming communities and neighbourhood services. (CIC, 2011, p. 5)

Under the two themes, the CIC also provides the following funding priorities:

1. Information and Orientation Theme: Preparing for full citizenship: Building on *Discover Canada* [CIC’s citizenship study guide], projects that create stand-alone curriculum and related tools, as well as provide orientation sessions to newcomers to improve their knowledge of Canada, including its laws and values, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the role of civic participation in Canadian society.

2. Community Connections Theme: Employer engagement: (1) Projects that seek to provide direct services to employers to facilitate their access to the immigrant talent pool. In particular, proposals that seek to coordinate among multiple service provider agencies will be prioritized. (2) Projects that seek to help employers in the active support of settling newcomer employees and their families. (CIC, 2011, p. 5)

The text above addresses two themes and two funding priorities for the application in 2011. The text shows that CIC is concerned about two kinds of themes, “information and orientation” and “community connections.” It clearly points out that the role of a government settlement agency is to provide new immigrants “with access to accurate, timely information about life in Canada,” or to assist newcomers “in their social engagement efforts,” and “engages communities in supporting the full participation of newcomers.” Under both of these themes, the government considered two main



services as funding priorities. One is citizenship education, which needs to “provide orientation sessions to newcomers to improve their knowledge of Canada.” Another is employer engagement, which requires the service programs to engage employers “to facilitate their access to the immigrant talent pool.” One can easily see that the Canadian federal government tried to engage its settlement services agencies to develop a top-down and linear approach to citizenship education and employment engagement in order to utilize new immigrants to strengthen the nation’s economy.

In 2010, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) News reported that the Canadian federal government cut the funding for immigration settlement agencies. It said, “various agencies across Canada have been informed by letter in the last two weeks that their funding will be cut by \$53 million in the next fiscal year, nearly \$45 million of that in Ontario alone” (CBC, 2010). According to the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), Canada’s largest private sector union, “the ten percent cutback in funding was quietly announced just days before Christmas, with most of the cuts falling in Ontario where at least 10 Toronto-based agencies had their funding cut altogether, and 35 other Ontario agencies had their budgets reduced” (UFCW, 2010).

There is a need to evaluate what the government means by “settlement” and “citizenship.” Before analyzing the concept of “settlement,” I briefly describe the historical context of the relationship between the federal and provincial governments in launching and funding settlement services. In 1998, due to funding cuts, CIC signed Settlement Realignment Agreements with British Columbia and Manitoba, in which the provincial governments have full responsibility for immigration settlement and integration service. However, in the rest of Canada, CIC continued to administer the delivery of settlement services. According to a report about immigrant integration in Canada from the integration branch of CIC in 2001, CIC also maintains an enduring federal role in the settlement realignment provinces “to ensure that services are comparable across the country by consulting with provincial ministries on a regular basis and including their service delivery organizations in any national initiatives” (CIC 2001, p. 17). In 2013, CIC cancelled the agreements. It now controls settlement services across Canada.

Here, the settlement service is seen as a part of nation-building, which helps newcomers acquire a second language, learn skills for employment, and build certain networks in order to integrate into the local society and labour market. While local government-funded settlement agencies such as the CultureLink program inculcate immigrants with dominant Canadian values, integrate immigrants into a unified national unity, and intend to utilize immigrants to strengthen the nation’s economy, they overlook immigrants’ identity construction process, and emotional and cultural integration into the local society. Although immigrants learn some Canadian values and culture from these agencies at a local level, they are largely excluded from the nation-wide Canadian

body. Hence, such funding criteria from the federal government again place immigrants at the bottom of a capitalist society and force them to produce wealth for the ruling class and benefit for the privileged groups.

As to the citizenship learning, CIC defines it as to “improve [newcomers’] knowledge of Canada, including its laws and values, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the role of civic participation in Canadian society” (CIC, 2011, p. 5). This project helps new immigrants to learn Canadian values, norms, and culture without any recognition of their identity shift, which affects both the notion of “Canadian citizen” and the practice of settlement. Citizenship, according to the CIC, is the common values, laws, and rights and responsibilities based on a unified understanding of what a Canadian citizen is or should be. The knowledge CIC acknowledges and the rights and responsibilities they believe a citizen should have are based on a white-centred knowledge system in which immigrants’ knowledge is largely excluded. The federal government’s idea of “settlement” and “citizenship” pays insufficient attention to immigrants and their identity construction process.

Text 2: CultureLink’s 2011 Annual Report

In their 2011 Annual Report, CultureLink announced their achievement of both increased funding and improved programs. They said:

The year has been a transitional year—a move to accommodate new directions in settlement services and to best serve the newcomers who arrive in Toronto under the new Modernized Approach model, with the goal of obtaining measurable, successful integration of newcomers into society along with the promotion of Canadian citizenship. The Program and Services Committee has worked very hard to manage this transition which included the retiring of the famous HOST program which was an initiative that fostered support and friendship for new immigrants and refugees. We are very proud of our competent staff who develop a new, state-of-the-art, settlement and integration focused program named Community Connections Mentorship Program (CCMP) to replace the HOST program. The new program contains many different components that really engage both integration and Canadian values. We couldn’t be happier with the quality of this model and would be pleased to share it with the sector. There has also been an improvement in our ability to increase and maintain our funding base in the face of global as well as national economic recession. We adapted to the prevailing direction of economic efficiency, effectiveness and sound investment, of limited and scarce resources, to produce a high return and good value for money. (CultureLink, 2011, p. 1)

In addition, they addressed their general achievements as follows:

We created a capacity and an infrastructure that is capable of meeting and measuring the national and regional strategic goals and outcomes for investment in settlement services, including: 1. Newcomers' employment commensurate with their skills and experiences. 2. Host communities provide a welcoming community to facilitate the full participation of newcomers into Canadian society. 3. Newcomers enjoy their rights and act on their responsibilities in Canadian society. 4. Newcomers contribute to the economic, social and cultural development needs of the country. (CultureLink, 2011, p. 1).

The statement above describes two major issues that the CultureLink program focused on from 2010 to 2011: developing programs and fundraising. In developing programs, they set up a goal of "obtaining measurable, successful integration of newcomers into society along with the promotion of Canadian citizenship," and they developed a new program engaging "integration and Canadian values" (CultureLink, 2011, p. 1). In response to the pressure of the federal government's funding cuts, they used multiple ways to manage funding while facing a global neoliberalism. This text is mediated by the CultureLink program, which acts as a government agency by educating citizenship through its local activities and as a service provider for brokering immigrants' learning activity and identity construction. On the one hand, in its settlement, language, and citizenship education services, the program reproduces the ideology of citizenship and multiculturalism under a global, transnational, and colonial context. While they announced that they educate newcomers in Canadian values and help them integrate into the Canadian society, they adopted the idea of nation building in response to their colonial stakeholders. They teach newcomers the Canadian culture, values, history, laws, rights, and responsibilities, but they stand for the colonizers and fail to address the history of colonized people, especially the Indigenous peoples and early immigrants and how they lost their lands, rights, and identities.

On the other hand, by teaching newcomers employment skills and engaging employers, the program cooperates with its funding providers and utilizes newcomers as migrant labourers in order to strengthen the nation's economy under the neoliberal restructuring. The settlement agency localizes a global inequality socially, economically, and culturally. They emphasize the nation's economic needs, and they label new immigrants as human labour for the local society and force them to integrate to the local labour market in the speediest manner. These programs overlook immigrants, who are at the bottom in the hierarchical institutional relations, and their transnational knowledge and skills, their identities, their race, gender, and class, and their actual living needs in this multicultural society.

6 Taking the standpoint: Stories from new Chinese immigrants in CultureLink

Lee's Story

Lee is a forty-year-old Chinese immigrant in Canada. He and his family immigrated to Toronto through the skilled workers class in 2008. From 2008 to 2009, he participated in the CultureLink settlement organization, especially in the HOST program. The HOST program is a mentorship program. CultureLink matches each new immigrant with a mentor, usually an old immigrant. The mentor, a volunteer, helps new immigrants to learn the Canadian culture, values, and language. Lee was a marketing manager in a US international company in China with ten years' work experience before he immigrated to Canada. He describes his experience as follows:

In the HOST program, they helped me to find a couple (as a mentor). They looked only a little older than me.... They were very nice, and we met twice. They are immigrants, from South Asia. They immigrated here many years ago.

While Lee participated in the settlement program, he found it was not very helpful:

I think that it's not so helpful because...you know... first, I think my language is very...how to say...they are not very helpful in improving my English. I mean...if my English was at a basic level, they might be helpful. At that time, I was worried about finding jobs, and I think they are helpless because most of the mentors are not in my professional area. They didn't know how to help me...you know...I didn't meet them very frequently... only two or three times. But they are very nice people. They spent a lot of time helping me, but that's not what I wanted. Also, I think it takes so much time in travelling back and forth, even though they live close to us, it still takes time.... When you assess a program, you should see if this program can help you achieve your goal. I think it's very difficult to reach my goal through these settlement programs. Many programs could help people improve their language skills or build certain networks. At least they are not bad. But to me, I think their help was not enough. In other words, they are not very helpful.

As a new immigrant, Lee set a goal of getting a job in his profession. He found that the settlement programs could not help him to achieve his goal. He has some reasons:

Every new immigrant has a very different background. For example, one of my friends, in China, he was a licenced lawyer. But when he immigrated here, it was very difficult for him to find networks with local lawyers. As an immigrant and a former lawyer, he didn't have any chance to connect to local lawyers or to join any lawyers' circle. Similarly, I worked as a professional as a marketing manager in China. After I had immigrated here, I found that many people working in



marketing are white people. They didn't even give me a chance to work as a professional in marketing.

Nowadays, all these immigration settlement service programs are run by all kinds of immigrants. If you go to these settlement service programs and ask them to help you find a mentor in your professional area, they never find you a mainstream mentor. I mean a white, a native speaker, or a professional in a higher social class.... All of these mentors are immigrants. In other words, in the mentorship programs, all new immigrants were helped by old immigrants. These mentors, seen as old immigrants, can only provide you with little tips. They cannot help you to achieve your long-term goals. The HOST program can give you some idea about what a Canadian family looks like, which provides you some interactions with a Canadian family. It may also help you to know Canadian language and the local society better, but I don't care about this. I need to survive in this society. What I need is to quickly find a job.

Lee also talked about his experience of learning English as a second language and Canadian culture in the settlement/language educational program:

First, I think the development of language skills depends on different individuals' learning ability, age, and educational background. I think it is very difficult for an adult immigrant to learn a second language from the beginner level. The HOST program at least provides us with a learning circle with some help. But I think it is impossible to improve your language only chatting with these friends for two hours each week. I believe the HOST program is good for networking, since many new immigrants came to Canada without any friends. It is important for them to meet some new friends. Second, I think the goal of these settlement educational programs is not teaching English. You know, if you want to learn English, it's better to go to the college or start a degree program. Second language learning is not only learning to say hello, but also learning to think in that way...you know.... For example, how to do a presentation, which could not be learned from any settlement programs. Most of the workers in these settlement programs are ordinary people, and even they don't know how to do a presentation. Also, what I need is training in using language in my professional area. So that's why I find the program is useless.

He also discussed his understanding of culture, knowledge, and identity:

For me, I think that culture is personal. Every individual has very different feelings in terms of culture. Even though my mentor in the HOST program wanted to support me and help me to learn some Canadian culture, I found that we had very different sense in understanding culture. They are not Chinese, so they don't know Chinese culture at all. They have been here for more than twenty years. They thought I might be interested in this, but I was interested in that. In the language circle program, the instructor taught us something very helpful in terms of culture. For

example, she taught us the names of five banks in Canada. I think that was helpful. However, I find that all of the "culture" she taught us is only knowledge. For instance, she taught us what "double double" means. I quickly learned these slangs, but, as I said, all of these things the instructor provided us are knowledge, which cannot help you find your identity. Most of the time, the teachers or social workers, especially the local people, didn't require you to acquire this knowledge or force you to change your identity, but I think I couldn't survive without this knowledge and identity.

Lee's interview reveals that the settlement agency has four inner flaws if we examine it from a new immigrant's perspective. First, the settlement agency treats all new immigrants as a collective group of people. It fails to understand them as individuals with hybrid and diverse backgrounds, identities, and needs. In the program, the administrators, instructors, mentors, settlement workers, and volunteers never distinguish these new immigrants from other immigration classes that came with different settlement needs. Second, the lack of funding for mentors causes problems in that those volunteers may not have good understanding of, or receive enough training in helping new immigrants settling in the society. Third, the settlement program mainly focuses on a short period of their settlement process, which is usually the first year after their landing. The program largely overlooks the fact that the settlement procedure could be a long-term process, which includes not only the process of finding a job, acquiring a second language, and learning the Canadian culture, but also a process of building a career, learning to communicate and survive, and reconstructing identity. As a result, the agency fails to attend to immigrants' feelings, identity, and knowledge, and their interactions with the program, the local people, and the host society. The program needs to understand that "settlement service" is not only a one-way communication of the government's project of civic education and nation building, but also a hybrid interaction process with various actors from the bottom, such as new immigrants, old immigrants, settlement workers, ESL instructors, program administrators, and so on.

Lee also spoke about his understanding of citizenship after he participated in the settlement service program:

Personally, I think they [citizens and immigrants] are the same from an economic perspective. But I know that some kinds of jobs only hire citizens...most of them are government jobs. But I think it's OK.... I think the exam for citizenship is very easy, it was necessary to have the exam. I also think the main purpose of this exam is not to test your language, but to teach you the Canadian rights and responsibilities because many new immigrants don't know how to protect their rights. That's good and necessary. Also, many Chinese new immigrants don't have any voting experience, and they don't care. When they are in Canada, they never care about their political rights. I think it is your right and also responsibility and they are combined together.

From Lee's story, I understand that citizenship is an identity, which is hybrid, dynamic, and fluid. It is also an ideology, which shapes people's idea of the world, the nation, and self and others. His understanding of citizenship is from economic and political perspectives, which relate to his employment experiences and his transnational everyday living experience in both China and Canada. Based on his previous knowledge and experience, Lee creates his own understanding of citizenship, which is distinct not only from what he learned from the settlement agents and the government's guiding book *Discover Canada* and his Canadian experience, but also from his previous Chinese experience. The Canadian rights and responsibilities he must learn are based on a Canadian knowledge system as well as race, gender, and class relations.

Finally, Lee provided suggestions for settlement service agencies:

When I first came, I participated in all kinds of settlement programs, such as HOST, TRIEC, and Career Bridge. All of them are government-funded. You know... there are a lot of settlement programs here... including the programs for teaching you how to pass the citizenship exam. I think all of them are helpful, and they are free...but all of them are too basic and similar. I think it is a waste of money. As a skilled immigrant, I don't need to learn ABC here in a settlement and language program. I need a more advanced level of learning. My purpose is to adapt to the mainstream society as soon as possible. I need a stable job, that's my goal. But I also think it is difficult for the government to achieve. You have to practise on your own.... I think the immigration settlement service is necessary, because it is a new field in providing work opportunities for many old immigrants, who could not find jobs in other areas except for helping new immigrants... but for new immigrants, it may not help them to find a job and reach their goals. I think the settlement service needs to improve.

This statement could offer us, as researchers, a reflection about what kind of settlement service we really need. As I stated above, there are quite a lot of inner flaws in these settlement service programs. The ISOs, such as CultureLink, act as an agent dealing not only with the government's funding of new immigrants' settlement programs, but also with the task of helping new immigrants settle in the new country. It is a dilemma that needs to be solved. By taking a new Chinese immigrant's standpoint, I suggest that the participants in these projects, including the government policy makers, settlement agency administrators, settlement social workers or instructors, and other related organizers need to consider to a greater degree newcomers' feelings, culture, identity, and needs, which might not be understood so easily but need to be learned through everyday practice and interactions with them.

Du's Story

Du is a thirty-three-year-old mother with a five-year-old daughter. She and her family immigrated to Canada through the skilled workers class in 2009. She was an instructor teaching media education in a Chinese university in Beijing. After she had arrived in Toronto, she participated in the CultureLink program, and she joined various programs there. In contrast to Lee, she thought this program was very helpful for her integration and settlement, and she provided a positive perspective on the settlement services in Toronto:

I participated in the mentorship program in CultureLink, which is also called the HOST program. This program is a settlement program. I know that the HOST program became the mentorship program around 2009. I participated in both programs. The benefit of the HOST is matching you with a local family in order to help you know local culture better.

In this interview, Du described the three programs she joined, which were the HOST program (2009), the mentorship program (2010), and the English circle program (2010):

Personally, I think my experience in the HOST program is successful. My mentor's name is May, and she is fifty years old. In the beginning, I needed more help in terms of my English language writing and speaking. She helped me to do some proofreading of my English writing. After that, we became very good friends.

After the HOST program, I also participated in the mentorship program in 2010. I think this program is...as I said...more organized. I met my mentor through a meeting like "speed dating." One night, there were ten mentors there, and we spoke to each mentor. After the chatting and filling out of forms, they finally matched me with a mentor. Through this program, I also met a good friend, Betty. This program requires both mentor and mentee to do some tasks, such as participating in a volunteer activity. So my mentor and I volunteered together for more than thirty hours, and we also needed to report what we did.... I think it is because the government needs some data reports for follow-up with the funded programs.

Another program I participated in at CultureLink is the "English Circle" program, also called "Conversation Circle." We meet every Tuesday night in Toronto's Reference Library.... Right now, the Conversation Circle focuses on citizenship education. They provide many fun games for us. For example, they help us to know the map of Canada through guessing the name of each province and watching the maps.

The conversation with Du revealed two ways CultureLink as a government agency performed brokering activities for new immigrants. First, they changed their organization and program content in order to fit the government's funding criteria. For example, they changed the HOST program to a more organized program, the



mentorship program, in order to collect data to examine and report on the effectiveness of the program. Second, CultureLink added citizenship education to its English Circle program in order to fit the government's 2010 application funding criterion of strengthening citizenship education. They also connected to the local public library, which could be seen as the best public space for educating citizenship and helping them to get involved in the local community and society. Here citizenship learning has become a part of language learning project deeply connected to not only the Canadian federal government's funding cuts, but also to new immigrants' language learning and identity (re)construction. The citizenship learning has been manipulated by hierarchical social and power relations involving multiple actors.

Du also introduced her expectations for these programs and her judgment and comparison of the HOST program and the mentorship program:

When I first came here, I didn't have friends, and I also needed to improve my English. So I needed to find a settlement program for making friends, but I didn't have any motivation to look for jobs. I also planned to study for a master's degree. My goal is to learn English and to make friends. I think I reached my goal.... I also find that the CultureLink program is very helpful for assisting me to adapt to the local culture. For example, my mentor May drove us to the farm, where we have never been before. We learned a lot from this trip with her and her family. In the HOST program, May and I became very good friends. I think it was a very good and helpful program. But in the mentorship program, we don't have any long-term connection after finishing the program. It also depends on different mentors. My mentor is very good in terms of keeping our friendship. We still communicate through emails.

According to Du, the changing of the program brings these newcomers very different feelings and experiences of learning. In the previous HOST program, she was more engaged, but she treated the mentorship program as short-term learning and achieving tasks. As a Chinese, she has different needs and experiences:

In the mentorship program, me and another Chinese immigrant are mentees with the same mentor. We are very comfortable working and learning together, because we have the same language and the same culture background.... Sometimes I couldn't understand the politics here...why we need to take an oath when we are becoming a Canadian citizen.... Another thing that I worried about is that Toronto is too liberal.... Sometimes I feel uncomfortable with some local policies, for example, the Bill 13 (Accepting School Act). As a Mom, I am anxious for my daughter's learning environment.... But the mentor always told me that her kids grew up very well in the public schools. She also encouraged me to be more understanding of others and the society. This is my only concern. But I prefer some of the educational approaches here and I learned

how to take care of my daughter in a Canadian way. Even though there are lots of commonalities and similarities [between China and Canada]. For example, May also likes family life, and she likes to teach her children through family education...you know.... Our Chinese people also emphasize education from family.

Last time in CultureLink, I did a reflection after I participated in a volunteer activity. We were volunteers in a Toronto art festival helping the audience. I have some questions about the feasibility or practicability of this volunteer activity because the program treated us as "bilingual ambassadors" and they wanted us to use our own native language to help different audiences. That's their original intention, and it's very good...but, you know, there is distance between your original intention and the reality. After I finished the activity, I found that our Chinese language is useless in that festival. Nobody cares about Chinese, and I think Chinese language is devalued there. Even though we provided a sign, said that we could provide translation or service in Chinese, nobody came, especially in that kind of art festival...you know...there was no audience that could only speak Chinese... After that, I feel so disappointed, and I think my native language is useless here.

When I talked with Du, I found that she really enjoyed her participation in all the CultureLink programs. Her identity shifted back and forth several times, which demonstrates hybridity and fluidity. On the one hand, she wanted to quickly join the local society, so she built networks and made friends with local people and families. On the other hand, she wanted to keep her original identity as a Chinese. She liked to learn and talk with her Chinese peers in the settlement program, which made her feel comfortable and secure. She also feels that it is difficult to accept some local liberal policies. She may believe that a Chinese mother should provide her daughter with a "conservative" learning environment, which she thought was safer. Therefore, she constructed or reconstructed her identities through her interactions with the settlement programs at CultureLink. Du's story tells us that every participant is unique and different. It suggests that while the programs change their ways of organization or practice in order to fit the changing funding criteria, they also need to recognize the changing identities and needs of all immigrants.

In addition, Du's account of her experience at the art festival in Toronto, when she found her Chinese language "useless," clearly shows how she found herself being racialized and excluded in the environment. There is a contradiction for Du between the idea of "multiculturalism," because of which people believe her Chinese language is valuable and she could become a "bilingual ambassadors" at that event, and the actual exclusion process in alienating her language and skills. In taking the standpoint of Chinese new immigrants, I find that their identity is constructed through this contradictory process and has been brokered by the agencies



with the purpose of promoting a Canadian ideology of citizenship.

7 Conclusion

Previous studies on immigration settlement educational programs pay much attention to curriculum development, teachers' training, citizenship education, and immigrants' education, identity construction, and language and settlement learning, but little attention to the separation between government policy, settlement agencies' activities, and new immigrants' learning practice. This paper addresses the dilemma that most government-funded settlement agencies face: the funding application and participants' needs. It explores how new immigrants, especially Chinese newcomers, contribute to the program and how their actual practice interacts with the hierarchical institutional relations on immigration in a global, transnational, and new economic context.

By taking the standpoint of new Chinese immigrants in Canada, I argue that the Canadian ISO's settlement services are socially organized and contain unequal social and power relations in new immigrants' citizenship learning and settlement practice. In addition, understanding Chinese new immigrants' experiences and identities could help the settlement agency better reflect on and reorganize its activities and curriculum. This research addresses the need to understand and recognize new immigrants' experience and identity construction process. Finally, the government and program texts and Chinese new immigrants' standpoint show that Canadian federal governments and government-funded settlement service organizations as partners inculcate immigrants with dominant Canadian values and integrate immigrants into a unified national unity, intending to utilize immigrants to strengthen the nation's economy in order to respond to neoliberal restructuring and globalization. These new immigrants easily get racialized and gendered by dominant ideologies while simultaneously being commodified by the administrators within the institutions. Citizenship learning should be seen as an ideological practice of both government and government-agency to highlight a united nation, which assimilates new immigrants' hybrid identities and devalues the knowledge they produce.

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